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Fitting coats and suits



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Home and Garden Bulletin No. 11

United States Department of Agriculture

Fitting Coats and Suits ■ ■ ■

By Margaret Smith, clothing specialist

More and more women are making their own coats and suits these days. Periodic sales reports of woolen suitings and coatings and suit and coat patterns indicate this trend to home tailoring. Many women also make some of their own alterations on ready-mades—or alter old garments to bring them up-to-date.

For those who do this more advanced type of home sewing, there is a need for practical help on fitting home-tailored coats and suits so that the garments will have a trim, well-tailored, custom-made look. This bulletin is planned to give such help, as well as to aid the woman who wishes to make some of her own alterations on ready-mades.

Unless you're experienced at sewing, don't undertake major alterations on a tailored garment of this kind. Straightening hems, putting in new shoulder pads, lengthening or shortening sleeves may be done by the amateur. But when more difficult operations are needed—such as setting in sleeves—considerable experience in sewing is required.

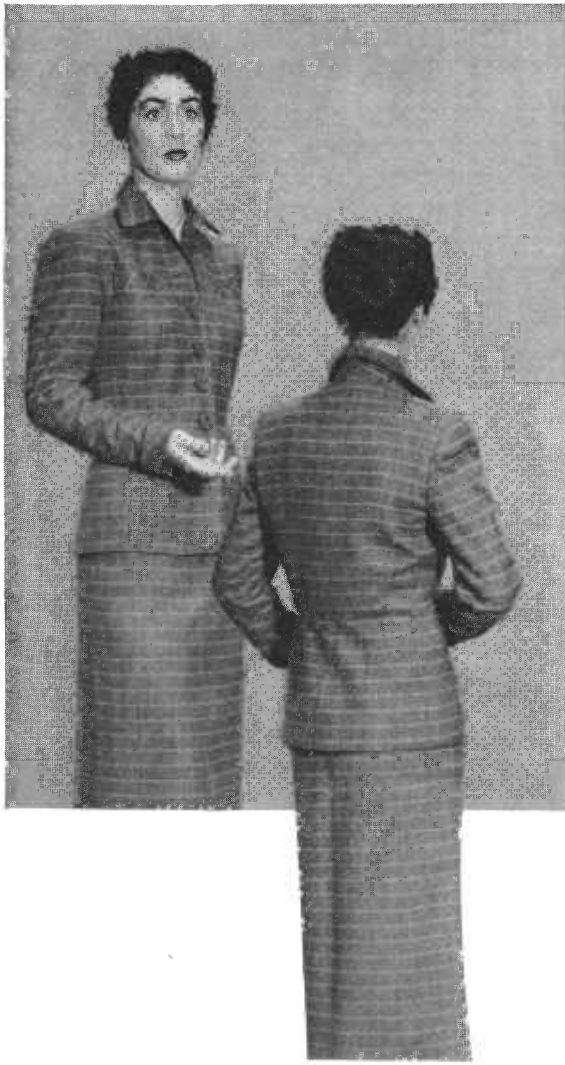
Detailed information on altering patterns and tailoring is contained in other U. S. Department of Agriculture publications prepared by this Bureau: Pattern Alteration, Farmers' Bulletin No. 1968; How to Tailor a Woman's Suit, Miscellaneous Publication No. 591; and Coat Making at Home, Farmers' Bulletin No. 1894.

Most of the fitting problems discussed in this bulletin may be found in either suits or coats, and the methods of correcting them are the same in garments of both types. Although some of the problems are caused by faulty cut or construction, most are a result of figure irregularities.

In order to save yourself as much trouble as possible be sure to buy the size pattern or ready-made garment that fits you best. Then, if some refitting is needed, a dress form made exactly to your measurements is a big help. Or do the fitting on yourself with someone to help you.

How coats and suits should fit

- | | |
|-------------------|---|
| Collar | Sets smoothly to neck, fitting close at back and sides; collar edge lies against coat, never ripples or turns up. Turn-over collars cover back neck seam. |
| Chest | Smooth with no wrinkles. Crosswise yarns parallel to floor. |
| Shoulders | Smooth; width follows current fashion. |
| Armholes | No wrinkles, either at sides or at bottom. |
| Front edge | Hangs straight down—no swinging toward sides. |
| Sleeves | Hang straight down from shoulders with no ripples or wrinkles. In a suit, sleeves follow position of the arm as it hangs naturally; coat sleeves usually hang straight, as they are generally fuller than suit sleeves. Crosswise yarns parallel to floor; lengthwise yarns vertical. |
| Side seams | Hang straight to floor; no swinging to back or front. |
| Back | Smooth across the shoulders, with crosswise yarns parallel to floor. No wrinkles below collar edge. For car drivers or bus riders, a little extra room across back saves strain on garment. |
| Waistline | In fitted suits and coats, the waistline should be about one-half inch below the normal one, as it stays in place better than when fitted to the actual line. A fastening at the coat or suit waistline prevents unsightly gapping of fitted or semi-fitted garments. |
| Hem | Coat, jacket, and skirt hems should be an even distance from floor all around. |



Fitting a home-tailored coat or suit

Hints about fitting

- Fit over type of clothing to be worn under the suit or coat.
- Be sure you have the garment on straight—that center front and back lines are in correct position and shoulders smooth.
- Insert shoulder pads for each fitting.
- Do all fitting with garment right side out.

• *Try on—*

After basting seams to be sure they hang straight.

When adjusting undercollar and fitting armholes.

When sleeves are basted in.

When hems are measured.

After each alteration to be sure of the fit.

- Press seams and darts thoroughly. Shrink in any excess fullness that has to be eased in so the fabric lies flat without ripples or bulges.



Make a muslin model

When you make a suit or coat, ward off fitting problems by making a trial garment of muslin. It will save time and material, for you may find a particular style unbecoming or the pattern may need too many changes. Even when a trial garment is made, however, some fitting needs to be done on the actual garment. Final fitting of sleeves, collars, and waistline must be done as the garment is made. A dress form, made like your figure, helps a great deal.

Make this trial suit or coat just like the pattern, taking in darts and making seams according to pattern markings. You need not attach the top collar or front facings; these do not affect the fit. Try on with shoulder pads in place; pin. Then check the fit carefully. If the garment is to be lined—perhaps interlined—it should not fit too closely.

Now, make changes needed in the proportion of the garment—changes that can't be made satisfactorily once the garment is cut. If it's too long or short from neck to waist, too wide across the chest, or sleeves too short, change the muslin.

Pin in darts if the garment is too long or too wide. If it's too small, slash the model and insert a strip of cloth to lengthen or widen wherever needed.

If many alterations must be made, it may be best to make another muslin model to be sure the changes will give a well-fitting garment. To do this, alter the pattern just like the muslin. Then cut a new model from this pattern. Or rip the muslin model apart and use the pieces as a pattern, if your material is firm and not likely to stretch.

If only a few changes are needed, a new paper pattern with the proper adjustments may be enough, and you won't need a new muslin model. If changes are minor, just alter the original pattern.

Adjustments in suit jacket or coat

Crosswise wrinkles above waistline and in sleeves

These crosswise wrinkles are caused by too much length in the waist. The sleeves are also too long.

To correct, pin tucks above the waist to shorten. If elbow fullness comes below the elbow, pin in a tuck deep enough to bring the fullness to the elbow. Shorten sleeves below elbow in the same way if necessary.

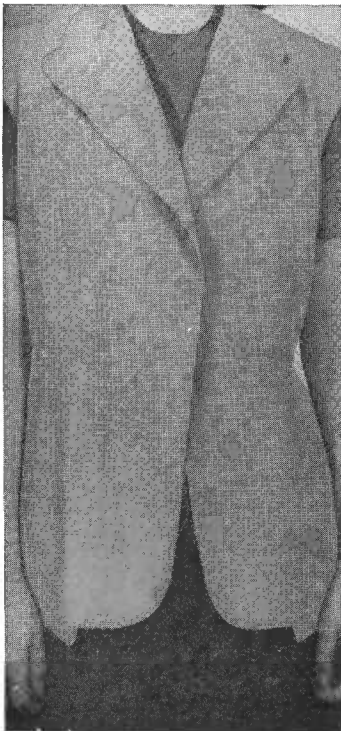




Waist and sleeves too short

When waistline is too short, the jacket or coat will flare out around the hips instead of fitting smoothly.

To lengthen waist, slash the muslin crosswise below the bust and insert a strip of muslin wide enough to bring the waistline down to $\frac{1}{2}$ inch below the normal waistline. Lengthen sleeves the same way if needed.



Front edge swings to back

If front edges of the garment swing back toward the sides, the front is too long between shoulders and waist. Flat-chested or round-shouldered figures often have this trouble. Patterns for coats and suits are frequently styled for erect, full-busted figures, and are too long in the front for many women.

To correct on the muslin model, pin a dart at the bust level deep enough to straighten the front edge. Taper the dart to nothing at the underarm. Then alter the pattern the same way or use the altered muslin garment as a pattern.

Front edge swings past front

When a jacket or coat pulls up in the front and the front edge swings past the front, the garment is too short over the bust.

To correct, slash the muslin model from the front edge over to the underarm seam, starting at a point just at the bust level. Drop the front edge until it hangs straight, then pin a strip of fabric under the slash to hold it in place. Alter the pattern the same way.



Diagonal wrinkles, underarm to center back

Wrinkles that go diagonally from underarm to center back indicate the garment is too short in the back between the neck and the waist. The jacket or coat also hikes up or sticks out in the back. This problem can show up in straight as well as fitted jackets and coats, and is often caused by round shoulders.

To alter the muslin model, slash the back from armhole to armhole and drop the lower section until it hangs straight. Pin a strip of fabric under the slash. Change the pattern the same way or use the altered muslin for a pattern.





Lengthwise wrinkles, shoulder to hem

When lengthwise wrinkles extend the full length of the coat or jacket, it is too full throughout. Usually you have this trouble when you want a straight coat and the pattern that you prefer has more flare than you want. Here the shoulder width is right, so changes are made below the shoulder.

To correct in the muslin model, pin the surplus



material in darts down each side, front and back, if needed. Be careful not to make the garment too small. Sew the darts in flat and try the garment on again. Then pin the same size darts in the pattern, taking care not to narrow the shoulders. Or rip the muslin model and use it as a pattern.

For a semi-fitted or princess style, make deeper side-front and side-back seams instead of darts to take out the extra width.



Shoulders too wide

When the armholes drop off the shoulders, the shoulders are too wide. To narrow each shoulder on a muslin model without narrowing the bust, pin a front dart down to the middle of the armhole, deep enough to make shoulder the right width. Narrow back the same way, leaving it $\frac{1}{2}$ inch longer than front for ease. Alter paper pattern the same way.



Shoulders too narrow

To correct too-narrow shoulders on a muslin model, slash the muslin from shoulder down to about $\frac{1}{2}$ inch from bottom of the armhole, both front and back. Move the armhole sections toward the arm until the shoulders are the proper width. Insert a strip of material under this slash and pin to hold pieces in place. Alter paper pattern the same way.



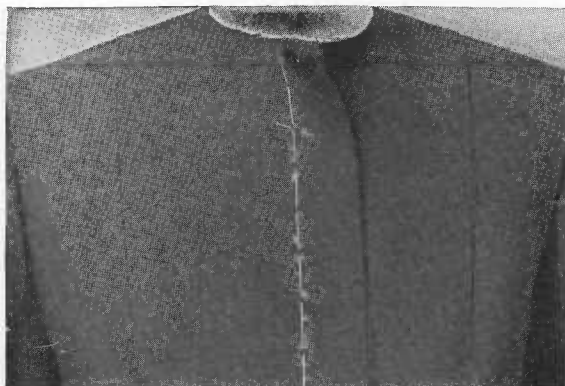
Wrinkles from underarm to sleeve top

A sleeve cap that is too short causes wrinkles from underarm to top of sleeve. Also crosswise yarns in the sleeve cap round up instead of being parallel to the floor.

To lengthen the sleeve cap in the muslin model, slash the sleeve cap crosswise and drop the lower



sleeve until it hangs straight. Pin in a strip of fabric to hold the sleeve sections in place. Take out the sleeve, open the underarm seam, and straighten the inset so the sleeve lies perfectly flat. Press the sleeve, then make a new paper pattern. The coat or jacket armhole may need to be trimmed out at the bottom to take care of the larger sleeve armhole.



Neck line too high, front or back

Neck lines of suit or coat patterns are sometimes too high in front or back. Don't change the muslin but wait until you're ready to attach the undercollar to the garment. You may not have to make as many changes in the wool as you would in the muslin, because the woolen garment will probably set better to the neck.

The easiest way to make the collar fit well is to sew it on by hand. Finish the neck edge of the



undercollar; next, put on the coat, pin it together in the center front. Then pin the undercollar to the coat so it sets snugly and smoothly to the neck. Then baste and sew the collar in place.

It is not necessary to mark the new neck line before sewing on the collar unless you have trouble getting both sides alike. In that case, choose the best side and mark the other one like it. You will need to mark the new neck line when the collar is to be sewed on by machine.

Skirt adjustments

Skirts are easy to fit, for, in most cases, seams and darts can be let out or made deeper to fit the waist and hips. However, if you have a large abdomen, or one hip is noticeably higher or larger than the other, or if you are swaybacked, it may be wise to try out the pattern in muslin. Or if you are using an unfamiliar brand of pattern, try it out in muslin to see how it fits. It is easier to slash the muslin and spread or lap the sections enough to make them hang straight than to make the necessary alterations after the skirt is cut out.

Walk around wearing the skirt, to be sure it doesn't bind or feel uncomfortable; skirts sometimes don't "walk" well—they may bunch up in

the front or cup under in the back. Try sitting, too, while you're wearing the skirt, to be sure there is no undue strain across the hips. However, if you want your skirt to be very slim-fitting, remember that it will not be especially comfortable for walking or sitting.

Often women use a well-fitting straight suit skirt pattern, or one with a becoming flare, over and over. The effect of one straight skirt is much like another; a four- or six-gored skirt may have just the right amount of flare to be becoming. If you have such a skirt pattern, it may be better to use it than to try to refit a new one. This is particularly true if the pattern fits you well through the waist and hips.



Seams twist to one side

If skirt seams of a muslin model twist to one side, probably this is because one hip is much higher or larger than the other. To correct the fit of the skirt, slash the muslin crosswise on the larger hip at the hip line, both front and back,



and drop the lower section until the seams hang straight and the skirt fits smoothly. Pin in a strip of fabric to keep the skirt sections in place. Make new skirt patterns, using the altered pieces. You will have a whole skirt pattern to use in cutting as one side of the pattern will be different from the other.

Fitting a ready-made coat or suit

When you alter a ready-made coat or suit, you are limited by style, by the seam allowance, by the accuracy with which the garment was cut, and by your particular fitting problem. If the jacket fits rather snugly through the waist and hips, you may not be able to get perfect fit through the body.

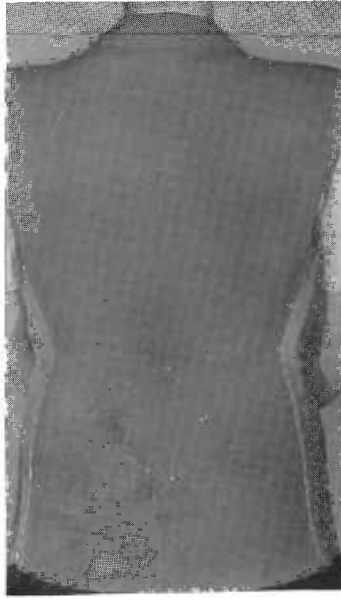
If the garment is too small anywhere—through the shoulders or across the bust—or if the sleeves are too short, it would be hard to alter it satisfactorily. Or, if some section, such as the sleeves or part of the skirt, has not been cut straight with the up and down of the goods, it will never fit you as well as it should.

You may also have more than one fitting problem in your suit or coat. Take care of just one at a time, but be sure that you've corrected all problems before you sew the garment together again.

Fitting hints

1. Try on garment to be altered over clothing normally worn under it; fasten. Be sure you have it on straight; it should not pull to one side, or draw up anywhere. See that all shoulder pads are in place; if you plan to wear shoulder pads in your dress or blouse, be sure they are in when you are fitting.
2. Look at the suit or coat from front, back, and sides to judge the fit. Decide what causes the wrinkles if there are any. Lengthwise wrinkles indicate too much width; crosswise wrinkles, too much length; diagonal wrinkles usually indicate need of shoulder, sleeve, or underarm alterations.
3. Have someone help you fit the garment on yourself. Or if you have a dress form that is exactly the same as your figure, use that when pin-fitting.
4. Do all fitting from the outside.
5. Pin in darts, tucks, or deeper seams to see if that will remove the wrinkles.
6. Pin-fit both right and left sides. If figure is larger on one side, alterations probably will be different for each side.
7. Rip with single-edged razor blade or ripper or cut stitching with sharp-pointed scissors and pull out stitches from each side. Avoid cutting the fabric.
8. Rip only seams, darts, and hems affected by the alterations.
9. Rip seams as far as needed so the new stitching line will be a continuous line where it joins the old. Sometimes seams must be ripped their full length. But if you can, leave enough stitching so you can tell how to put the garment together again.
10. Open seams and hems that are crossed by the seams to be altered.
11. Don't rip pockets or buttonholes. Avoid ripping collars, if possible.
12. Rip lining only where necessary.
13. If sleeves must come out, mark right and left sleeves; also mark thread notches on sleeve and jacket armholes so they can be matched when sleeves are sewed back into garment.
14. Keep shoulder padding, interfacings, bindings for use again.
15. Baste in alterations; try on before stitching.
16. Press flat all ripped seams, hems, darts before restitching.
17. Stitch accurately on basting line or on marked stitching line.
18. Trim off surplus seam allowances after stitching.
19. Press all seams, hems, darts smooth to give tailored look.
20. Put garment back together again, replacing pads, interfacings, facings, and linings that were removed.

Adjustments in suit jacket or coat



Crosswise wrinkles above waistline

Crosswise wrinkles at the waistline such as those in this jacket are a result of too much length in a garment from shoulders to waistline in both front and back and a too-snug fit at the hips.

To correct, rip the underarm seams from an inch below the armhole seam to the bottom of the underarm seam and open the hem. Let the garment slip down until it fits smoothly at the waist and pin back and fronts together. Shape the seams at waist and hips. If the jacket fits snugly at the hips, make the side seams as narrow as possible.

A new hem line probably will be needed as the jacket will be longer than it was originally.

Usually sleeves need not be removed for this alteration unless more width is needed through the bust. In the jacket illustrated, shoulders needed narrowing so the sleeves were taken out. (See p. 15 for alteration for shoulders too wide.)

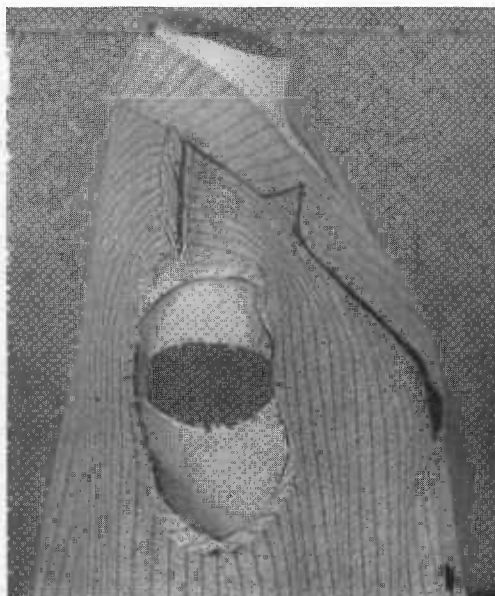


Diagonal wrinkles, underarm to center back

Diagonal wrinkles from underarm to center back mean that the upper back is too short. The waistline also rides up in the back.

Lower the back waistline of a fitted garment by pinning in deeper darts or seams so the widest amount taken in is $\frac{1}{2}$ inch below normal waistline. Sleeves were taken out here because of wrinkles in back armhole (see p. 17).

To lengthen the upper back of a straight coat, rip off the collar at back, open the shoulder seam, and drop the back as much as possible. If style and material permit, a back yoke is a good means of adding length.



Side seams swing to front

When side seams of a jacket or coat swing forward, the garment is too long in the upper back. To correct, shorten the back at the shoulders.

Take out sleeves and rip collar across the back to about 2 inches in front of shoulder seams. Open shoulder seams. Lift the back up on the shoulders

until the side seams hang straight, and pin to front shoulders. Pin the collar to back of coat so it sets well to the neck. Mark the new neck line.

Stretched armholes may also add to the effect of too much back length. To correct stretched armholes, see Wrinkles in back armhole, page 17.

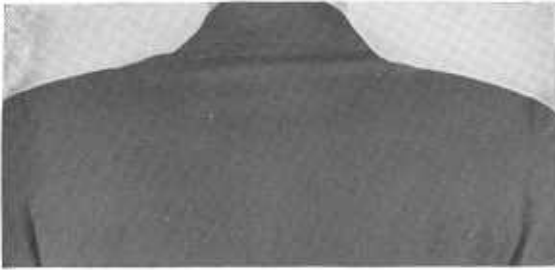


Garment rides back on neck

When a coat or jacket pulls back on the neck and the shoulder seams ride to the back, the front armhole is usually too long in comparison with the back armhole.

Take out the sleeves, rip off the collar across the back, and open the shoulder seams. Try on,

and move the shoulder seam to the front by taking a deeper seam off the front. Mark the new neck line and shoulder seams. Baste, try on, then stitch and press. The armhole will now have to be lowered the same amount that was taken off the top of the armhole. (See alteration for armhole too high, p. 18.)



Crosswise wrinkle at back of neck

A crosswise wrinkle below the collar often indicates a too-high neck line; or sometimes the shoulder pads are too square or thick.

To lower a too-high back neck line, take off the collar across the back. Lift the back up on the neck so it sets smooth. Pin undercollar on so it sets well. Mark the new neckline formed by the



undercollar. If the neck line now seems too wide across the back, ease it in with hand or machine gathering. Shrink this fullness in flat before replacing the collar. A basting line to mark the center back helps in making both sides of the neck alike.

In this jacket the sleeves had to be taken out to narrow the shoulders. (See p. 15 for alteration for too-wide shoulders.)



Lengthwise wrinkles over chest

Lengthwise wrinkles over the chest of a jacket or coat indicate that the garment has too much fullness there. If there are front darts or a side front seam, the seams or darts usually can be stitched deeper to take out most of the extra width. The darts should be lengthened just enough so they taper to a smooth point. Be sure to rip the first row of stitching so the dart can be pressed flat.

In this jacket the extra fullness could be taken



out between the shoulder seam and dart point, so shoulder seams did not need to be opened. Take care that the new row of stitching makes a continuous line where it joins the old stitching line.

This alteration usually requires little ripping of the jacket or coat—only where the darts are restitched. The lining also must be opened enough to reach the darts. Sleeves in this jacket were ripped out because of wide shoulders. The too-wide shoulders and crosswise wrinkles at the waistline were eliminated in other alterations (see p. 15 and p. 11).



Lengthwise wrinkles over chest—Continued

When a set-in pocket interferes with deepening the front dart, or there is no front dart, move each front out toward the arm.

Take off the collar, rip out the sleeves, and open the shoulder seams. Try on and move one front away from the neck until it is smooth across the chest. Pin front and back shoulder seams



together so they fit to the shoulder. Do the same with the other side. Mark new seam lines following the row of pins. Try on, then stitch.

The front armholes now extend beyond the back armhole so they must be trimmed off evenly with the back. Now the front neck edge is not even with the back, so pin the collar in place and mark the new neck line. Then trim off the neck seam allowance until it is even.



Lengthwise wrinkles above back waist

Lengthwise wrinkles in a jacket or coat above the waist show that the garment is too wide there.

To correct, remove the fullness by taking deeper back seams or darts according to the style. Little ripping is needed for this alteration. Open the



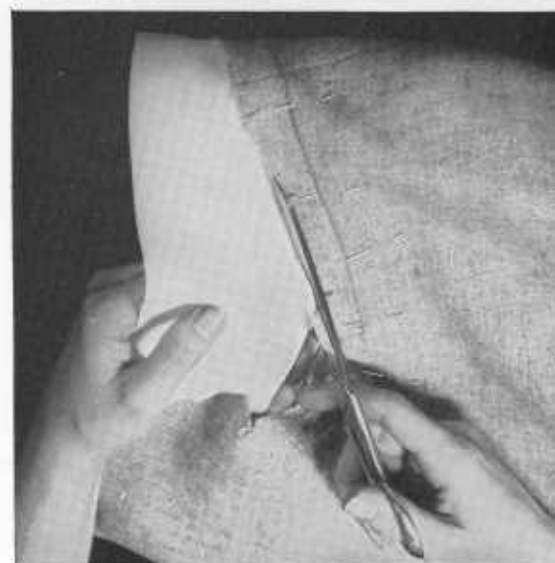
lining just enough to reach the seams and darts from the inside in order to stitch them evenly. Pin in the deeper side back seams or darts until the back feels comfortable and there are no wrinkles. Mark new stitching lines on the wrong side, baste, and try on. Stitch and press.

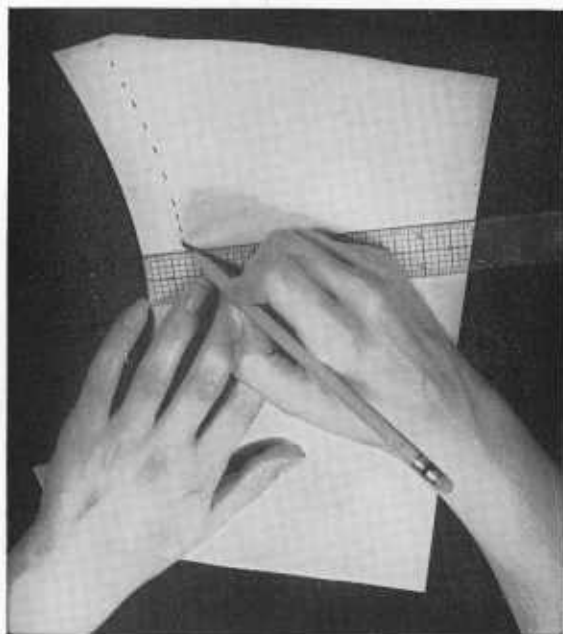
Shoulders too wide

Sometimes new shoulder pads will hold the shoulders out so they will not look too wide. But if the shoulders are much too wide, they'll need recutting. This alteration will shorten the sleeves, so see if they can be lengthened sufficiently by letting out the hem and facing the lower edge or by adding a cuff of matching or contrasting fabric.

To narrow the shoulders, first take out the sleeves and sleeve lining. Try on jacket or coat. Turn under sleeve seam allowance at the top, and pin to the armhole at top and down the sides so the shoulders will be the desired width. Mark a line with pins around the top of the armhole just beside the pinned-in sleeve. This line will be used as a guide for marking a new armhole seam and indicates the finished shoulder width. Do not cut the armhole now as an armhole pattern needs to be made in order to get the armhole seam exactly right. The altered armhole should be exactly the same as the original.

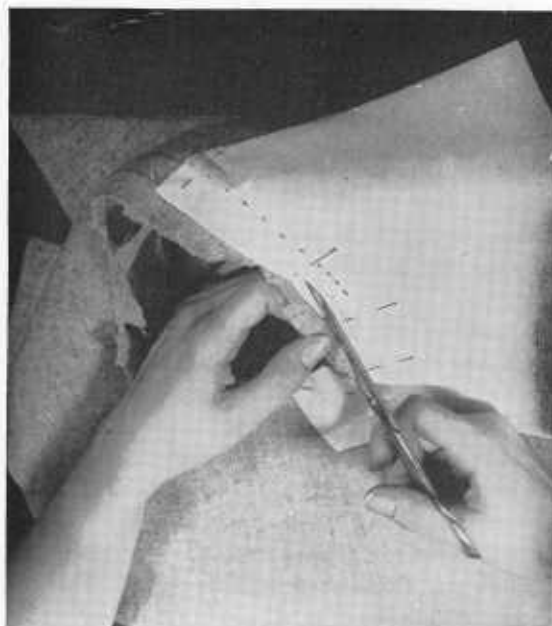
Take out the shoulder pads. Then make an armhole pattern as follows: Pin a sheet of paper flat to the back armhole; cut the paper along the armhole line. With pencil mark shoulder and underarm seam lines and the armhole stitching line on the pattern. Make a pattern of the front armhole the same way . . . and mark the seam allowance with pencil.





Shoulders too wide—Continued

Pin patterns to the coat with the armhole stitching line of the pattern meeting the new armhole line of the coat—the line previously marked with pins. Let the lower edge of the pattern fall on the lower edge of coat armhole. This keeps the original size and depth of the armhole but narrows the shoulders. Cut.



The sleeves will need to be lifted at the underarm to give the needed length in the sleeve cap (see p. 19). Gather sleeve tops; pin and baste into armhole. Pin shoulder pads in place; try on. Stitch armhole seams and press. Tack pads in place. In this coat the sleeves were too short, so the hems were let out and faced.

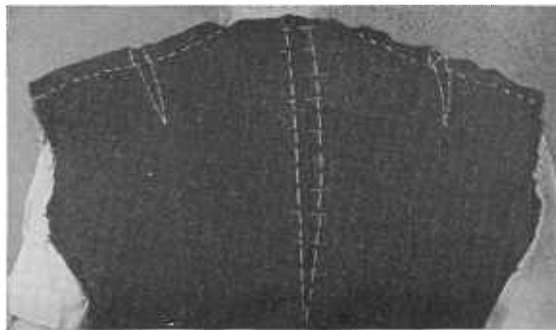




Crosswise wrinkle over back of shoulders

A wrinkle across the back of the shoulders usually means the jacket or coat is too small across the upper back. This tightness often causes wrinkles in front, too, from neck to bust.

Widen the upper back, if possible, by letting out the center-back seam and any darts that may be in the neck or back shoulder. Let out the seams



far enough so the garment will fit smoothly across the back. This means that shoulder seams as well as armhole seams must be ripped.

This alteration makes the back neck line wider so the collar must be lengthened. Let out the center-back seam if there is one; if not, you may need to make a new collar of matching or contrasting fabric, such as velvet.



Diagonal wrinkles, neck to underarm

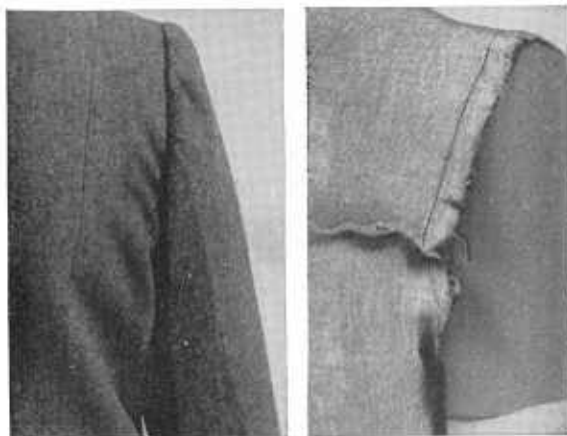
In a coat or jacket, diagonal wrinkles from neck to underarm are usually caused by too-shallow shoulder pads. Try on the coat and slip several thicknesses of cotton or paper handkerchiefs under the shoulders to be sure that thicker pads will take out the wrinkles.

Open the lining at armholes and shoulder seams; take out the pads. Put in new ones the thickness of the old pads, plus the cotton. Or quilt cotton wadding to the under side of the old pads. Pin pads in place and try the coat on. If pads are now thick enough, tack them firmly to armhole and shoulder seams. Replace the shoulder and sleeve lining.

Wrinkles in back armhole

Wrinkles or bulges in a coat or jacket armhole may be caused by a rounded back, a rather full bust, or an armhole that has been stretched.

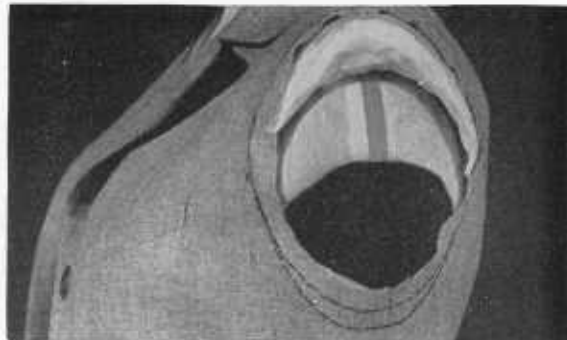
To correct this trouble, take out the sleeves, then pin in tucks where there are wrinkles or bulges until the armhole sets smoothly to the figure but does not bind. Be careful not to draw the armhole up at the underarm; that would make the armhole too high and cause a crosswise wrinkle at the underarm. Tape the armhole to hold fullness in place and shrink it until it lies flat.





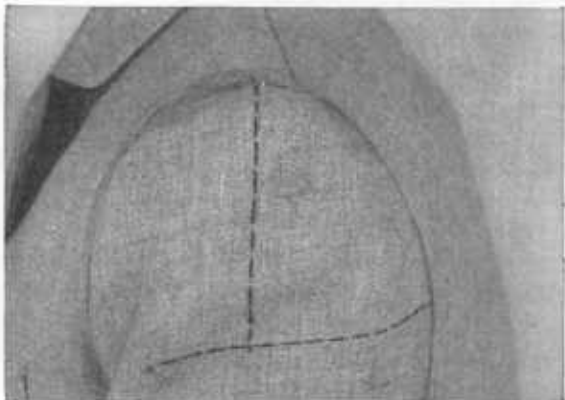
Crosswise wrinkles at underarm

Crosswise wrinkles at the bottom of the armhole are caused by a too-high armhole. To correct this, first measure the depth of the wrinkle to see how much lower the armhole should be. If the wrinkle is $\frac{1}{4}$ inch deep the armhole will have to be lowered $\frac{1}{2}$ inch. Take out the sleeves. Mark the new armhole line $\frac{1}{2}$ inch down from the old



one right at the center of the underarm. Blend this new line gradually to the old one about one-third of the way up each side of the armhole. Be careful not to make the armhole wider than it was before.

Adjust the sleeves to the new armholes. The sleeve cap will now probably be too short, so see directions on page 19 for altering a too-short sleeve cap.



Diagonal wrinkles in sleeve cap

Diagonal wrinkles in the top of the sleeve usually mean that the sleeve has not been set in straight. Take out the sleeves and mark straight-of-goods in the sleeve cap, both lengthwise and crosswise. More than one crosswise row is helpful in setting sleeves straight.

Try on coat or jacket; pin sleeves to armhole, easing fullness to top and sides so the crosswise marks are parallel to floor and the lengthwise marks go straight up and down. When the sleeve hangs right, mark corresponding notches on sleeve and jacket armhole for matching. Pin and baste sleeves to armholes. Try on before stitching. Press.





Wrinkles from underarm to sleeve top

Wrinkles from underarm of the sleeve toward the top of the sleeve indicate a too-short sleeve cap. This is a rather common trouble. To correct, make the sleeve cap longer by raising the sleeve at the underarm.

Mark underarm and shoulder points on sleeve and armhole. Take out sleeves; press armhole seam flat. Slip sleeve into armhole, with underarm mark in line with underarm seam. Hold sleeve flat under the coat or jacket. Work out crosswise



wrinkles in sleeve underarm by easing the bottom of the sleeve armhole up beyond the coat armhole until the sleeve lies flat. Sometimes the sleeve armhole will extend an inch or more above the coat or jacket armhole. Pin sleeve to armhole, easing top and sides of sleeve to the original armhole.

Baste a seam's width from the edge, following the coat armhole line as a guide for the lower part of sleeve armhole. Try on before cutting off surplus seam allowance.

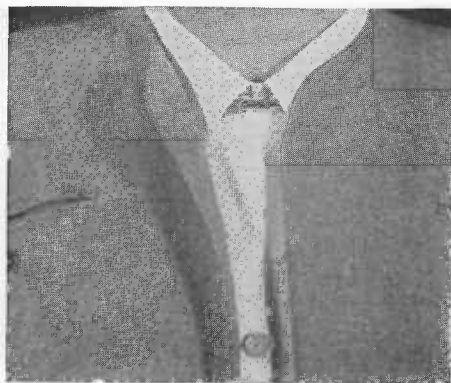


Lengthwise wrinkles in upper sleeve

Lengthwise wrinkles are usually the sign of a too-full sleeve. Be careful when narrowing a sleeve that you don't make it so narrow that it looks tight. Allow for the lining and the garment to be worn underneath.

To narrow the sleeve, pin in a lengthwise tuck on either side of the sleeve; when the sleeve is narrowed enough, measure tuck to see how much fullness must come out before unpinning tucks.

Mark the shoulder point on both right and left sleeves. Take out sleeves and lining. Open sleeve underarm seams and hem. Press. Pin sleeve to paper and cut a sleeve pattern. Mark straight-of-goods and shoulder point on pattern. Slash and lap the pattern sections the amount needed. Recut sleeves and the sleeve lining by this pattern, making sure straight-of-goods marks are straight with grain of the goods. Seam the sleeves, press, and reset into armholes. Usually the coat armhole need not be changed.



Top front edge rolls back

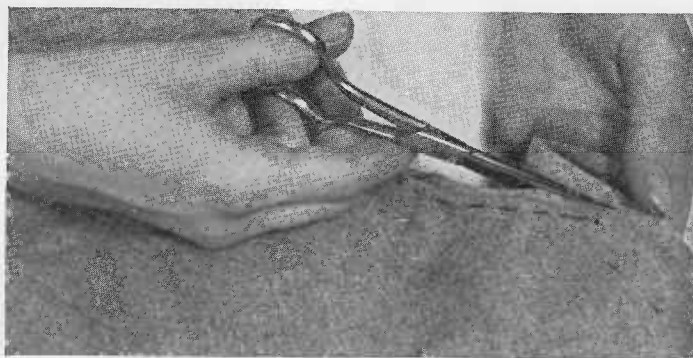
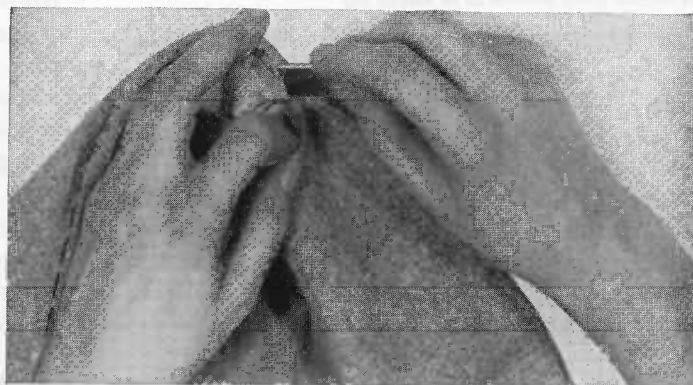
If the lapel facing of a dressmaker-type suit is wider than the outside, rather than smaller, the top front edge rolls back instead of lying flat. In this jacket the neck line is slightly too high at the sides, which also helps to make the edge roll up.

To correct, mark a new neck line on one front with either basting thread or chalk. Don't mark on the right side with wax pencil; it may not come off. Rip off facing from shoulder seam at about 2 or 3 inches below the top of the lapel. This alteration is made entirely on the right side of the garment.

Trim off extra material beyond the new neck line, leaving about $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch seam allowance. Clip, if necessary, to make the neck line lie flat. When the seam allowance is narrow, clipping may not be needed and may cause the neck line to stretch.

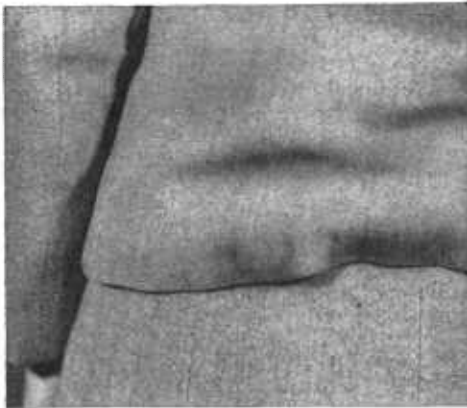
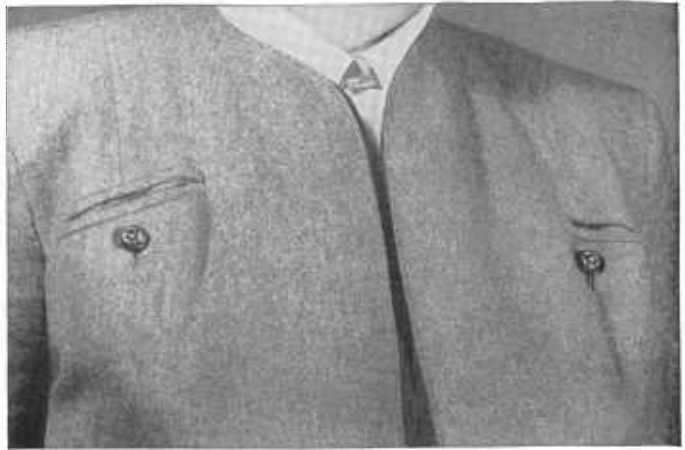
Turn under the outside edge on new neck line and baste; turn under neck edge of facing about $\frac{3}{16}$ inch; baste and press. This makes the facing a little smaller than the outside and keeps the seam edge slightly to the under side. Pin and baste facing and outside together so that the fold is $\frac{1}{16}$ inch inside the outer edge. This keeps the seam edge from showing on the right side.

Slip-stitch the two pieces together by hand with small stitches; press.



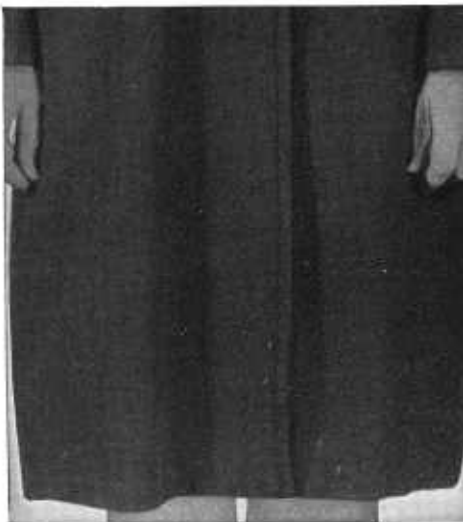


Lay finished neck edge flat over the other front, with shoulder seams, armhole seams, and front edges exactly matching. Mark the new neck line on the unaltered front, exactly along the neck edge of the altered one. Make the same alterations on this front.



Lower edge draws up and puckers

If a jacket or coat lining that is hemmed down to the garment is too short, it is likely to pull up at the bottom and make the coat look puckered at the lower edge. To correct, loosen the lining where it is too short and make a narrower turn-up at the bottom. If it still seems too short, hem the lining and garment separately. Join lining to jacket or coat at the seams with long French tacks.



Lower edge draws in

A lower edge that draws in is the result of a lining that is too tight. To correct, loosen lining around outer edge. Make smaller seams in the lower part of lining, if possible. Or move the front edge of the lining back on the front facing as far as you can. Finish coat and lining hems separately, joining the two at the seams with long French tacks.

Skirt adjustments

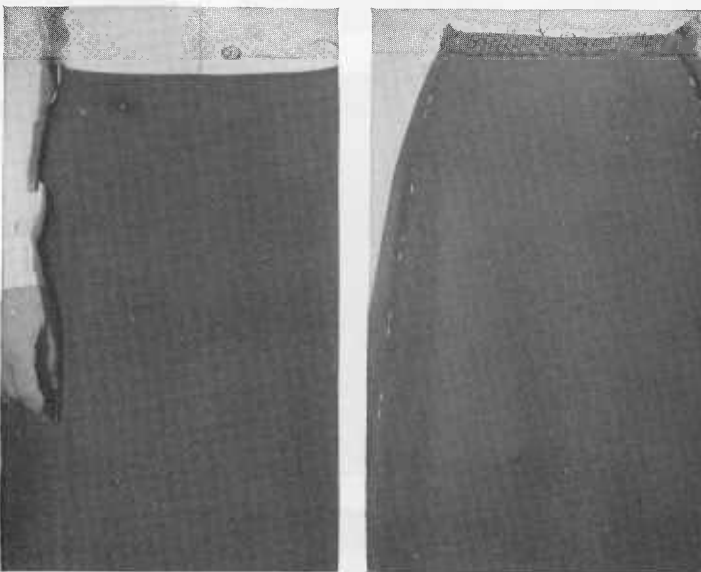
Skirts should fit smoothly at the waist and hips, but should not bind when you sit or bunch up in front as you walk. Seams should hang straight, not twist or curve.

Skirts are easier to fit if they have been cut out correctly with the grain of goods and are too large rather than too small. When you fit a skirt be sure to keep the side seams straight with the underarm seam of the jacket, the center-front and center-back seams exactly in the center, and the side-front and side-back seams an equal distance from the center. Mark the center front and back with bastings.



Too full at waist and hips

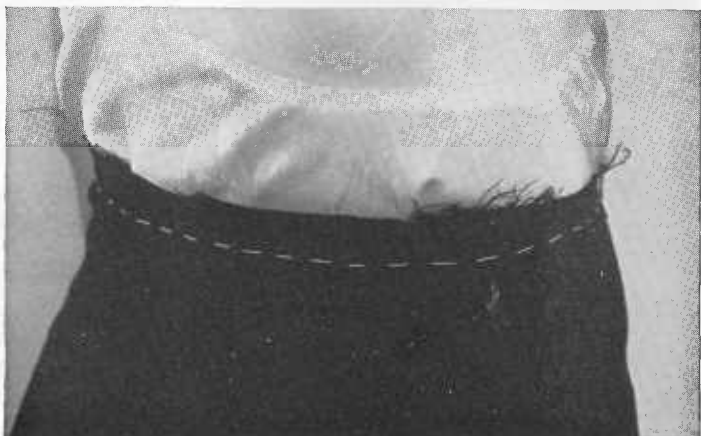
To correct a two-piece skirt that is too large, rip off the belt and take an equal amount out of each side seam. If the skirt is a four-gored style, take in at center front and center back to avoid ripping the placket. If it's a six-gored skirt, alter side-front and side-back seams, or, if possible, only in the front or back. Pin in seams until the skirt fits.



Wrinkle around back waistline

If a skirt rolls up over the belt in the back, it needs to be shortened across the back. Women who are sway-backed often have this problem.

To correct, rip off the belt; try on the skirt. Lift skirt up in the back until it sets smooth around the waist and hips. Tie a cord around the natural waistline and mark this line with pins or tailor's chalk. Trim off seam allowance so it is the same back and front. Sew on the belt. Rehem, if necessary.



Seams twist to one side

Skirt seams may twist to the side for either of two reasons or a combination of both. If the skirt hem is also short on one side, the problem is probably caused by one hip being larger or higher than the other. If this is not the cause of twisted seams, a skirt or section of it may not have been cut on the straight of the goods. The latter will show up especially after dry cleaning.

To correct seams that twist to one side because one hip is larger or higher than the other, first take off the belt. Then lift the skirt up on the smaller side until the seams hang straight. Then pin in the seams until the skirt fits smoothly at the waist and hips. Tie a cord around the natural waistline and mark a new waistline all around. Replace the belt and rehem the skirt.

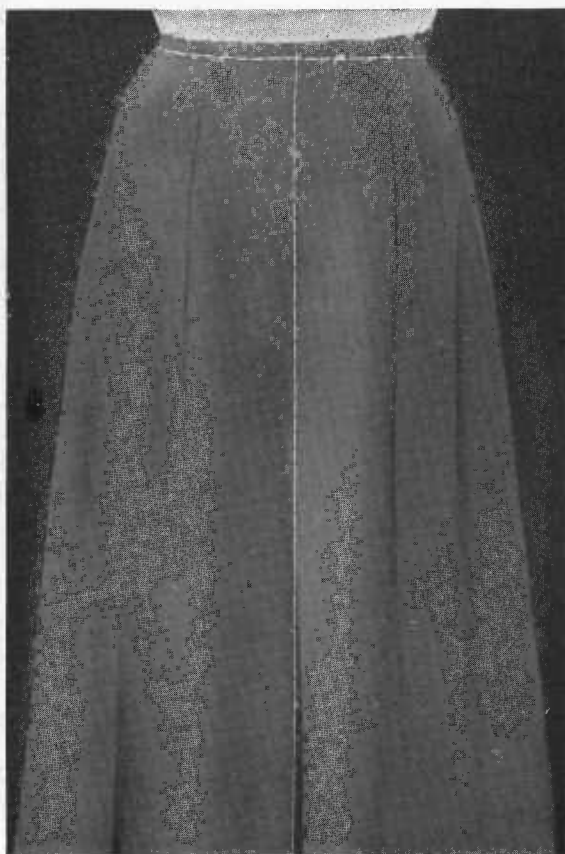
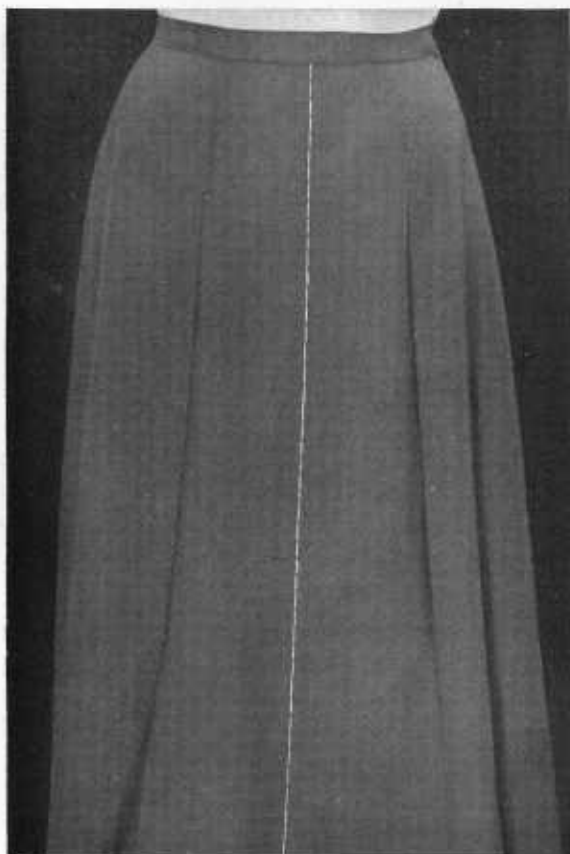
The only way to alter a skirt that hangs badly because it has not been cut on the straight of the goods is to recut the skirt, if the style permits. If the skirt is quite narrow, it may be impossible

to recut it so it will be large enough when finished.

First, baste a line to mark the straight-of-goods, both lengthwise and crosswise, on the crooked sections. Then, with a yardstick held even with the floor, mark a perpendicular line on the skirt to indicate the direction the straight-of-goods should follow.

Rip the crooked sections of the skirt; press open the seams and the hem. Make a paper pattern of the section. On this pattern mark the straight-of-goods, following the perpendicular line marked on the skirt section. Then lay the pattern on the skirt section so the straight-of-goods marks on the pattern are exactly parallel with the straight-of-goods line on the skirt. Recut.

The seams may need to be narrowed; the slant of the seams may have to be changed; but cut the skirt as near to the original size as possible. Be sure any changes in size or shape are made on both left and right sections so the skirt will hang alike on both sides.



Key to fitting problems . . .

PROBLEM	USUAL CAUSE	To correct—	
		Home-tailored	Ready-made
		Page	Page
In body of coat or jacket:			
Wrinkles:			
Crosswise wrinkles above waistline...	Waist too long.....	4	11
Diagonal wrinkles, underarm to center back.	Upper back too short.....	6	11
Lengthwise wrinkles, shoulder to hem.	Too full through the body.....	7	
Crosswise wrinkle at back of neck....	Back neck line too high.....		13
Lengthwise wrinkles over chest.....	Garment too full over chest.....		13
Lengthwise wrinkles above back waist.	Back too full above waist.....		14
Crosswise wrinkle over back of shoulders.	Upper back too narrow.....		17
Diagonal wrinkles, neck to underarm.	Shoulder pads too shallow.....		17
Wrinkles in back armhole.....	Back armhole too large or stretched..		17
Crosswise wrinkles at underarm.....	Armhole too high.....		18
Waist too short.....	.....	5	
Front edge swings to back.....	Too long in front between shoulders and waist.	5	
Front edge swings past front.....	Too short over bust.....	6	
Shoulders too wide.....	.....	7	15
Shoulders too narrow.....	.....	7	
Neck line too high front or back.....	.....	8	
Side seams swing to front.....	Upper back too long.....		12
Garment rides back on neck.....	Front armhole too long.....		12
Top front edge rolls back.....	Lapel facing too wide or neckline too high at sides.		20
Lower edge draws up and puckers.....	Lining too short.....		21
Lower edge draws in.....	Lining too tight.....		21
In sleeves:			
Sleeves too short.....	.....	5	
Sleeves too long.....	.....	4	
Wrinkles from underarm to sleeve top...	Sleeve cap too short.....	8	19
Diagonal wrinkles in sleeve cap.....	Sleeve set in crooked.....		18
Lengthwise wrinkles in upper sleeve.....	Sleeve too full.....		19
In skirt:			
Seams twist to one side.....	One hip larger or higher than other...	9	23
	Skirt not cut on straight of goods.....		23
Too full at waist and hips.....		22
Wrinkle around back waistline.....	Too long at back waistline.....		22

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